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23 August 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation With King Zog of Albania on
17 August 1951.

1. I called on King Zog at his suite at the Mayflower Hotel on 17 August 1951, with a view to securing further information from him on his own ideas concerning the organization of an insurrection to overthrow the Communist regime in Albania. After some general conversation, during which he reminisced about his activities in World War I and his detention by the Emperor of Austria in Vienna, and a discussion of our mutual interest in fencing, I told him that I would be very interested in having more information on his ideas concerning the best way of creating a revolution in his country. He expressed great willingness to discuss this matter, said that he had given the subject much thought and felt that, as indicated during previous conversations, it would be most desirable to conduct the action as though it were a spontaneous revolution breaking out within Albania. The general scheme of action follows:

a. The first steps to be taken should be directed at improving and raising the morale of Albanians in general and at assuring the neutrality of neighboring countries. This can be accomplished if the United States will do the following:

(1) Make a declaration indicating that the United States stands firmly in favor of the preservation of Albania's territorial integrity, and that any changes arising from territorial claims by other countries must be made through the mechanism provided by the United Nations Organization for the adjustment of such disputes.

(2) Bring about declarations by Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy that they undertake not to attack Albania through the use of armed force, and that in the event they should have territorial claims against Albania, they will adjust them through the proper machinery established by the United Nations Organization.

b. The steps involved

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b. The steps involved in preparation for the insurrection consist of the preparation of plans, the accumulation of an adequate stock of military equipment, the recruitment of such personnel as will have to be introduced from the outside, and the preparation of the ground within the country. The King is prepared to participate in any of the following arrangements provided the United States will back the project. He can undertake to do the planning with his own staff and to direct the entire operation himself; he will work jointly with our staff in preparing plans and will conduct the operation with the aid of our observers and advisers; or he will accept such plans as we may prepare and will work for us under our direction. As regards the operation itself, it can be conducted as an Albanian liberation movement led by him, or as a movement led by the Committee, or as a movement in which the details are all organized secretly in advance and into which the Committee is brought after the project is well underway. He considers his own staff of army officers as adequate for the proper planning and execution of this project and claims that he can recruit all the necessary personnel up to a possible ten thousand men, should that be necessary or desirable.

c. As soon as a general plan of action has been developed, the King considers it necessary to prepare the ground in Albania by sending in four or five officers, who are now available and whose mission will be to effect a rapid reconnaissance of the country and establish certain contacts in the armed forces and among various individuals who will be called upon to support the movement when it gets underway. These officers can, if desired, be accompanied by one or two American volunteer observers. It would require approximately a month or six weeks to make a quick survey of all areas and explain in general terms to those concerned what the various leading participants inside will have to do when proper instructions reach them. Following exfiltration, it may be necessary to make certain revisions to the project based on new information which the officers will bring out with them.

d. In the meantime, communications personnel will have to be trained and the necessary equipment for the operation be assembled at some point from which it can be delivered to guerrilla units in Albania. This phase the King leaves to us, with the thought that he can recruit the personnel, but all training and equipment will have to be supplied by the United States. Furthermore, the question

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of delivery by air will also be an American problem. Equipment for approximately ten thousand men should be available in order to assure the success of the enterprise. This equipment will be needed for guerrilla forces organized within the country and also for equipping such armed groups as may be introduced from outside. It is the King's estimate that the total armed force required to overturn the present regime will have to number something of the order of 25 to 30 thousand men, but that at least two-thirds of this force will be in possession of or will secure the necessary military equipment as a result of defections within the army and the security forces, as well as from such small stocks of arms as may still be available to the anti-government mountaineers.

e. The King emphasized that it was absolutely essential to attempt to use all the non-Communist Albanians willing to join in the action, and that he considers it desirable to encourage all emigre leaders to go into the country as soon as the insurrection breaks out. This, he says, will permit these leaders to rally around them whatever followings they have and to make use of the country's entire anti-Communist potential. During this period, all political action by the political parties must be discouraged and prevented insofar as possible, all efforts being directed toward the complete overthrow of the established regime.

f. As the King sees it, in the ideal situation the project would progress in the following order:

- (1) Statements by the United States, Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy concerning their policy toward Albania.
- (2) Preparation of operational plans by a U. S. staff, working jointly with King Zog's staff.
- (3) Stock-piling of arms and ammunition for ten thousand men.
- (4) Simultaneous training of communications personnel.
- (5) Reconnaissance trip through Albania by four or five of King Zog's officers with a view to preparing the ground for necessary local cooperation and for securing up-to-date information.

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(6) Clandestine

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(6) Clandestine movement of small forces into Greece or other areas from which they can be introduced into Albania. The King expressed a marked preference for infiltrating a number of bands over the Greek border and said that it was almost essential to have the cooperation of the Greeks in order to undertake the Albanian operation.

(7) Movement of clandestine agents into the country followed by outbreak of open revolt - operations to begin with a few choice assassinations to be carried out by persons who are presently within the Albanian Government and who are still loyal to King Zog.

(8) Introduction of small Albanian forces by air and overland with King Zog himself and his staff, followed by the members of the Albanian National Committee and such other Albanian groups as may wish to participate in the revolution. At this stage, arms will be dropped by air to supply guerrilla units in accordance with arrangements made by clandestine agents in advance. Defections from regular ground forces will increase the revolutionary army to the strength required for the overthrow of such forces as may remain loyal to the regime.

(9) Upon termination of the military phases of the operation, the National Committee members and other political leaders will undoubtedly begin their political activity. At this stage, King Zog will invite the U. N. to send representatives to insure that the formation of a new Albanian government develops in accordance with democratic plans.

g. King Zog emphasized the fact that if we so desire, he will undertake to plan, organize and execute the operation. On the other hand, if we prefer it, the United States can conduct the entire operation and he will perform whatever functions we may consider most useful.

h. In regard to relations with Greece, the King expressed a fear that the British may have some secret commitment to allow the Greeks to occupy the Northern Epirus in return for abandoning Greek claims with regard to Cyprus. Should there be any such understanding, he feels it will be most difficult to persuade the Greeks to make the statement

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concerning their intentions to press territorial claims through the U. N. apparatus. However, he thinks that possibly the United States has enough leverage through economic aid to force the Greeks, Yugoslavs and Italians to come through with the desired declarations.

i. The King then talked about the necessity for creating a general Balkan anti-Communist front and stated that he had had a number of conversations with prominent refugees and was shocked with the dissension among the various political factions. Specifically he mentioned the Yugoslavs, pointing out that there were at least three factions of Serbs alone. He said that his discussions had led him to the conclusion that all these difficulties could be eliminated and general unity could be established if the United States made a firm declaration to these groups of what the United States will support. He went on to say that in the case of the Serbs and Croats, he had obtained what amounted to assurances from a number of prominent leaders that they will accept whatever principles the United States wishes to establish in regard to the settlement of Serbo-Croat problems in Yugoslavia. He indicated that he would continue his talks with various Balkan refugees in order to try to unite them in a solid Balkan anti-Communist movement and eliminate their petty partisan rivalries and conflicts.

j. At one point in the conversation, the King stated that he would like to make known to me a personal secret concerning his reasons for urging immediate action in Albania. He said that he considers a war with the Soviet Union practically inevitable and that if such a war did take place while Albania is still nominally lined up with the Communist satellites, she would stand little chance of preserving her boundaries in any post-war readjustment because countries like Greece and Yugoslavia, who would be presumably aligned against the Soviet bloc, would gobble her up. Consequently, he feels it essential to bring about such a state of affairs in advance of war as to make Albania technically one of the allies fighting against the Soviet bloc and thus insure for Albania the treatment to be accorded to a victorious rather than to a vanquished nation.

k. In concluding, the King stated that he will be delighted to discuss any matters that we may wish to bring up in the future and let us have his views and opinions on Albanian and Balkan problems. He said that

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he will remain in New York for the next two weeks before returning to Egypt, and extended to me a cordial invitation to stay with him either at his hotel in New York or his home in Alexandria should I wish to see him again.

Chief, EE-1

EE-1/GMY/clb

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